

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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AT THE MOMENT OF VICTORY.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," etc.

CHAPTER II.

UPTON CASTLE stood high among the Cumberland hills, some nine hundred feet above the sea level. Above its grey stone walls the Cuddaw Fell rose in sharp grandeur another nine hundred feet, belittling with its sweeping curves and massive crags the stronghold beneath, which once had held its own with the best of border fortresses, and which successive masters with big purses and luxurious tastes had adapted to the exigencies of modern requirements.

"The mountain belongs to us," Lance used occasionally to say, looking upward with a measuring eye to the cloud-capped Fell. "Or we belong to it," he would add as an afterthought. "I'm not quite sure that isn't a better way of putting it."

Had any one asked Lancelot Clive, at this period of his career, to put his notions concerning the whole duty of man into a nutshell, he would have replied without a moment's hesitation, "Get as much fun out of everything as you possibly can."

He had a free and easy way of treating the elderly Sir Peter, which at times Madge wondered over, and at times she envied. But then he was a protégé of a different stamp to what she had been. His mother, who had died at his birth, had been a Critchett, and his father had been Sir Peter's oldest friend. When Colonel Clive had died suddenly of fever in India, it seemed the most natural thing in the world for Sir Peter to continue the orphan lad's education, and, when Eton

and Oxford were said good-bye to, to install him at Upton as his adopted son and heir.

"The young fellow was born to good luck," everybody said, although at the same time they were willing enough to admit that things must have been very different with him had Gervase Critchett lived, or had a son.

Gervase Critchett had been Sir Peter's only brother, who, as a young man, had been seized with a sudden desire for wild life in the West. In pursuance of this idea he had gone out to Mexico, had bought a rancho there and had been killed, there was every reason to believe, in one of the numerous, unreasoning insurrections which the history of that country records.

Lance was a thoroughly genial, good-hearted young fellow. He had a lofty way of patronising everybody, and everything that came in his way which might have been irritating or amusing, as the case might be, if it had been less genially, or unconsciously extended. "Uncle Punch and Aunt Judy," had been his school-boy nicknames for Sir Peter and Lady Judith. It was a misfortune for Sir Peter that his wife owned to the Christian name of Judith, it so forcibly suggested the characteristic sobriquet for her husband.

In the same lofty, patronising fashion, Lance would speak of the old Castle as "the dungeon," or "the jail," or more frequently still as the "whited sepulchre," "tolerable for three weeks at a time, insupportable for a fourth."

It was the grey of the mountain-side which suggested the last unfortunate simile. Seen in the glint and glare of a noonday sun on a summer's day the old Castle stood out in hard staring whiteness against the graduated grey of the rocks.

But when the summer's sun had sunk behind the Cuddaws, and the red sunset flames had died out of its windows, the old house seemed to shrink into the mountain side, and become part and parcel of the shadowy crags. Purple then became the keynote of colour of the whole landscape.

An artist sketching it might have done without his reds and yellows, but his purple he must have had, or his picture would have lacked that subtle yet everywhere-present charm of mystery which only the shadowy purple could impart. There it was, deepening the grey of the mountain, the silver of the overhanging mist, flashing darkly out of the sheen of the distant lake, clouding the blue of the thickset pine-wood, and finding its focus in the foreground of the picture in the luxurious heather which spread itself in straggling patches over hillside and valley.

That valley seemed to stretch away into a limitless distance, until it kissed the horizon. Lower Upton, with its new railway station and few scattered cottages, lay hidden somewhere among its copses.

Lower Upton was about seven miles distant from the Castle "as the crow flies," but a good nine miles if the windings of a steep, rocky road be taken into account. That was a nasty bit of road, especially at midday under a scorching sun, with Uncle Peter "in good form," as Lance was apt to phrase it, on the box seat.

"Uncle Peter" was in uncommonly "good form" on the morning when he and Lance set off together for the scene of the railway disaster; that is to say, he made the nasty bit of road seem double its length with an incessant flow of interruptions or rather what would have been such if Lance had not been wary.

"Lance," said the old gentleman so soon as they were outside the Castle gates, "it has only just struck me that we might have sent a man on to Carstairs to tell the doctors there. Of course, old Broughton will be on the spot, but he may want additional help. We had better turn back and leave a message."

"All right!" said Lance, touching up his horses, not turning their heads, "we'll leave a message for Aunt Judy at the keeper's cottage as we go along."

A message was left at the keeper's cottage, and Lance rattled along over the flinty road for another half-mile. Then a second idea "struck" Sir Peter.

"It has just occurred to me, Lance," he said, with a sudden start which would have

shaken the nerves of a timorous "whip," "that it would have been as well to have left word for the wagonette to be sent down after us; it might serve instead of an ambulance. Just turn the horses' heads. It's only a question of a quarter of an hour."

"Ah, that will do at the next cottage—Turvey, the mole-catcher's. We will send a message back by one of his small boys," answered Lance calmly as before, and again whipping up his horses.

Then Sir Peter had cramp first in one leg, then in the other, and insisted upon getting down to "walk it off."

Finally, within half a mile of Lower Upton, his third and last "idea" struck him.

"I do think, Lance," he said, getting more and more cheery as they neared the scene where he supposed his energies would be called into requisition, "that it would have been a good idea to have told them to send down with the wagonette something which could be converted into an ambulance—wonder it didn't occur to you when you left the message at Turvey's. The sufferers may be too much injured to stand the jolting of—"

Here Lance pulled up sharply. "Ho, there!" he shouted to a man who chanced to be coming along with a cart of hay.

"Who-a, my lass," said the man to his horse, and stood at attention.

"You're going up the Cuddaw Road, I suppose?" queried Lance. "Well, you will meet Sir Peter's wagonette coming down. Tell the man to turn back, take the doors off the stables, and bring them along with him—they're wanted for ambulances."

"No, no!" shouted Sir Peter. "There are plenty of hurdles down at the farm. Are you out of your mind, Lance. Do you hear, my man, hurdles from the farm."

But it was exceedingly doubtful whether the man heard him, for Lance had once more touched up his horses, vowing that unless they put speed on, they might as well turn back at once. Then he drew a fancy picture of the scene of disaster, which, possibly, the railway station presented; of wrecked carriages lying along the line, sufferers in various stages of mutilation stretched on the platform awaiting succour.

Sir Peter subsided into tranquillity, as Lance knew he would, before the prospect of so vast a field for his energies. He buttoned up his coat, so as to be tight and trim, and ready for action.

"If I were you I would let your shirt-sleeves alone," said Lance, noticing a side glance which the old gentleman gave to his wristbands.

Sir Peter looked like a naughty child forestalled in some mischievous idea.

"But we'll take our rugs with us, Lance," he said; "they'll be sure to come in useful one way or another."

But alas for Sir Peter's forethought and prognostication! The little railway station presented its usual picture of rustic quietude as Lance drew rein at it.

The station-master came forward to reply to Sir Peter's queries. The accident, he explained, had occurred five miles down the line. A number of coal trucks had been overturned through the breaking of some coupling irons, and, as the line could not be cleared before night, all traffic through Lower Upton was stopped for that day.

"The worst damage," he went on to say, "was the inconvenience to which passengers travelling North had been put. They had been compelled to alight at Lower Upton, and had had the choice offered them of remaining there for another twenty-four hours, or, of travelling back twenty-five miles of their road to Carstairs, whence they could travel North by various routes. Most of the passengers had adopted the latter course—all in fact except one—a young lady," here he glanced towards the waiting-room of the station, "who appeared to be greatly annoyed at the delay to her journey, and who seemed unable to make up her mind what to do. She spoke with a foreign accent," the man farther stated, "and he was not sure whether she thoroughly understood his explanation of how easily her journey might be continued by travelling back twenty-five miles."

"Capital!" said Lance, "there's something for you to do after all, Uncle Peter. Of course we're bound to offer our services to the young lady. We can drive her anywhere she would like within twenty miles, or take her to the Castle for the night and bring her back in the morning when the line's clear. 'Greatly annoyed,' 'foreign accent.' Why, I'm beginning to feel like Don Quixote already. Come along."

They went into the waiting-room to see a tall, slight young lady standing there with a small portmanteau at her feet. She wore a long grey travelling cloak which reached to the hem of her dress, a grey beaver hat, and grey gossamer veil which entirely hid her features.

CHAPTER III.

THE hot afternoon began to wane. Lady Judith and Madge drank their tea out of doors under a spreading cedar, which made a shady nook on the lawn. Madge brought out a writing-folio with her, thinking it possible that Lady Judith might fan herself to sleep, as she often did on a summer's afternoon, and thus give her the opportunity of getting through a little of her correspondence.

Lady Judith, however, was not disposed for sleep, but for "conversation," in her sense of the word, that is. The number and variety of topics she touched upon while she and Madge stirred their tea, suggested a comprehensiveness of knowledge which would have done credit to the compiler of "Enquire Within Upon Everything."

Madge leaned back in her rocking-chair, indulging in her own train of thought under cover of an occasional sympathetic remark, which Lady Judith as often as not did not hear.

Sir Peter and his fads, as might be expected, received the lion's share of the lady's criticism; thus:

"My dear, if it had not been for me the Castle would long ago have been turned into an orphanage or almshouse, or perhaps into a lunatic asylum—though, for the matter of that, it's half-way on the road to one now at times, with the queer sorts of people he brings into it." And so forth for a good twenty minutes, with brief interludes for fan or tea-cup.

Lance and his misdoings next received, as it were, a passing glance.

"Where is the use," she queried pathetically, "of my saying to him as I do every day of my life, 'Lance, do your best to keep Sir Peter from making himself ridiculous'? Or of his saying to me, as he does every day of his life, 'Aunt Judith, I go to bed at nights with Uncle Peter on my mind, I get up in the morning with him on my mind, and he is on my mind all day long'? when he never so much as lifts a little finger to keep him out of mischief. My dear, it's my belief that that young man looks upon life as nothing more than a big jest from year's end to year's end. He'd sell his soul any day of the week, and think himself well-paid if only he could get a laugh out of the bargain."

The mere mention of Sir Peter's name had been guarantee to Madge of close upon

half-an-hour for uninterrupted indulgence of thought. During the recapitulation of his offences she had been mentally concocting an answer to a letter received from her lawyers that morning, asking for instructions on certain matters connected with the Cohen property.

"Dear sirs," she had been writing in intent, "I wish the bonds and deeds you speak of were at the bottom of the sea. Do just whatever you like about them. And as for the house at Redesdale, it may be unlet to the end of time for anything I care—"

She had got so far, when Lance's name high over her head, in Lady Judith's falsetto, brought her letter-writing to a halt. For once in her life her ideas were in unison with Lady Judith's.

"Sell his soul for a laugh—yes, that was Lance to the backbone," she said to herself a little bitterly. From morning till night playing at life instead of living it. Never in earnest—never even seeming in earnest. If he had only seemed ever so little in earnest six months back when he had made her his offer of marriage, how gladly she would have said "Yes" to it, instead of meeting it with the indignant exclamation, "Sir Peter told you to ask me." Then she drifted into cloudland again, picturing a series of pleasant possibilities, if Lance, for once in his life in downright solemn earnest, were to come to her and say: "Madge, I forgive you for doing what you were bidden and marrying money-bags. I loved you then, I love you now, I shall love you always." Ah! how gladly would she pour out those money-bags at his feet! What a heart's delight the counting of her gold, the management of the Cohen property would be to her then. And as for lawyer's letters, they might come every day of her life, and be welcome as love-letters, if only she had the privilege of tossing them over to Lance, and saying: "You'll settle all that, won't you?"

When her wing wearied and she came down from cloudland, Lady Judith had taken Mr. Stubbs, the new secretary, for her text, and was descanting upon his qualifications, or otherwise, for his duties.

"It's my belief, my dear," she was saying when Madge's sense of hearing came back to her, "that Sir Peter only engaged him because he heard from the people who recommended him at Carstairs—I forget their name—that he had been unfortunate in business matters all his life through. He has been twice through the Bankruptcy

Court; at one time he was a stockbroker; then he turned lawyer's clerk; then he went into a newspaper office at Liverpool; after that into an auctioneer's office; and after that—after that," this repeated with a contemptuous emphasis, "he comes to Upton Castle and acts as private secretary to Sir Peter!" Here Lady Judith paused to fan herself, and to get breath to go on again.

"He wouldn't be so bad-looking if only he would open his eyes wider," said Madge, feeling she was expected to say something. "As it is, it makes me sleepy to look at him."

Lady Judith only caught a part of her sentence, and characteristically understood it to refer to Sir Peter.

"Open his eyes a little wider!" she exclaimed shrilly. "I wish to goodness he would! He would see then how people impose upon him, and lay traps for him to walk into, and then make fun of him behind his back. But there—one might as well tell a blind man not to run his head against a post as tell Sir Peter to open his eyes and look an inch in front of him."

They had now travelled in a circle back to their starting point—Sir Peter, and his delinquencies. Madge mechanically returned to her unanswered lawyer's letter. "I don't care two straws," her thoughts resumed, "whether the house at Redesdale is let or unlet, or whether the farmers are paying half-rents or whole rents—" She had got so far when the sound of wheels coming slowly up the steep drive which led through the grounds to the Castle made her look up, to see Lance in the distance, waving to her from his high dog-cart.

She looked and looked again. Was that Sir Peter seated behind? Where was the groom, then, and who was that, all in grey, seated beside Lance on the box seat? were the questions which rapidly presented themselves to her for an answer.

Evidently they suggested themselves to Lady Judith also, for she broke off abruptly, shaded her eyes with her hands, and inquired, "Whom have they brought back with them? Can you see, my dear?"

Madge shook her head. "Another protégé, I dare say," she answered. But the way in which she spoke the word "protégé" was a protest against her use of it. The emphasis she laid on "another" seemed to say: "I least of any one in the world ought to throw stones from out my glass-house."

Sir Peter, in spite of his short legs,

was out of the cart before Lance. He crossed the lawn towards the ladies in a very great hurry, while Lance followed at a more leisurely pace, accompanied by the young lady in grey—Madge could see that she was young, by the slimness of her figure, and the grace of her walk.

He came up looking hot, and a little out of breath. "My dear," he said, addressing his wife, "you heard of the accident at Lower Upton. The young lady we have brought back with us had no chance of continuing her journey to the North for another twenty-four hours; so I told her you would be delighted to receive her till——"

Lady Judith arose from her seat erect and stately.

"I want to know," she said in an authoritative voice, "whether there are any more coming. I heard that the wagonette had been ordered to follow."

Evidently she had had visions of the wagonette returning packed with lame, maimed, halt, or otherwise injured individuals.

"No, no, no," and Sir Peter shook his head vigorously to emphasise his noes; "only this young lady, I give you my word. Let me introduce her to you."

A few steps behind him, Lance was presenting the lady in grey to Madge.

Madge had left her rocking-chair and the shade of the spreading cedar, and stood in the glare of the sunlight on the lawn. Lance stood facing her, with the glint of the sunshine on his curly hair, and its gleam in his bright, blue eye. Between them stood the young lady, tall and shadowy in her grey garments.

"She came like a shadow between us; I felt my blood chilled," was the description Madge gave of this meeting in after days.

At the moment, however, she merely thought to herself:

"Why doesn't she lift her veil? Does she intend suddenly to startle us with a blaze of beauty? or is it perhaps because, like me, she isn't proud of her face, and prefers keeping it hidden as much as possible?"

As if conscious of Madge's thought, the young lady at that moment raised her veil, and dared the unshadowed light of the blazing summer sun.

Madge stood looking at her wonderingly.

The face that she saw, albeit one likely to attract an artist's pencil, was not of a type easy to class. The features—so far as nose, mouth, and chin went—though fairly regular, were unpronounced; the

complexion was of a dead, unvarying white, which was doubly accentuated, first by coral red lips, next by black straight bars—not arches—of eyebrows, and a thick band of black hair drawn straight across her forehead. The eyes Madge could not see, for the young lady kept her full white lids downcast. It was a face which might attract, and a face which might repulse, according to circumstances; but whatever it might be, it was not a face to be seen one moment and forgotten the next.

"What a peculiar-looking young woman," thought Lady Judith, putting up her eye-glass and staring at her uncompromisingly.

"Eh, I had no idea she was half so handsome behind her veil," thought Sir Peter, taking a steady survey.

"She would make a grand Cleopatra if her eyes are as black as her brows," thought Lance.

"She might sit for the portrait of Jael, who drove the tent-peg through tired Sisera's forehead," said Madge to herself, as far off as ever from answering her own question as to the young lady's beauty.

Evidently she did not mind being looked at, for her face showed not the faintest sign of embarrassment.

But, whether intentionally or otherwise, she avenged herself for Lady Judith's eye-glass.

"Is that your housekeeper?" she asked, turning to Madge, and speaking in a slow, deep voice, with an unmistakably foreign accent.

As she spoke she lifted her full white lids, and Lance saw not the black eyes her hair gave promise of, but large dark-grey ones.

How Sir Peter at that moment thanked Heaven for his wife's deafness!

"That is Lady Judith Critchett," answered Madge stiffly.

"What does she say?" asked Lady Judith, conscious that she was an object of attention to the young lady.

"That she is delighted to make your acquaintance," said Lance, right into Lady Judith's ear.

"Ah, yes," said Sir Peter, drawing a full breath of relief, "let me present you to my wife, Miss—Miss Rosalie," he began hesitatingly.

"Jane," corrected the young lady.

The incongruity of the name with the face struck Madge.

"Ah, yes, Miss Jane—Jane——?" went on Sir Peter interrogatively.

"Jane Shore," answered the young lady. The incongruity of the name seemed to vanish at once.

The dressing-bell at that moment rang out its reminder. Madge thought it best to end an ungracious situation graciously.

"If you will come with me," she said, addressing Miss Shore, "I will show you to your room, and send my maid to you."

"Thank you," was the reply, in slow, halting phrases, which seemed to imply that the English tongue was scarcely mastered. "I will not trouble you to send a maid. I have been travelling for two whole days. Will you give me a bed? It is that I want, not dinner. I am tired—nearly to death."

And the three last words were spoken in a tone which set Lance's brain wondering, his heart pitying.

ROTTEN ROW.

WHETHER in the short summers of our clime Rotten Row be crowded by the rank, the beauty, the wealth, and the fashion of the world's metropolis, or whether in the long winters and winterly springs it be deserted by the multitude, and left to the stray dogs, the impudent and hungry sparrows, or the rare visits of a solitary policeman, it is one of the most celebrated thoroughfares in Europe. Bustling as a highway, or solitary as a byway, it is under both aspects a place of interest to the peripatetic philosopher. The Champs Elysées, with their continuation the Bois de Boulogne, in Paris, and the Prater in Vienna, are alone to be compared with it for the attractions which they offer to the inquisitive and idle crowds who love to gaze upon and criticise the ostentatious displays of their superiors in opulence and its attendant splendours. But Rotten Row differs from both of these renowned haunts in one important particular. London, in spite of the growing cosmopolitanism of its manners, lives as much as possible at home, and Paris and Vienna live as much as possible out of doors; and London, partly for climatic reasons, partly for the incidence of the excise laws, and of magisterial interference with and regulation of the amusements of the people, maintains no pleasant *al fresco* cafés, restaurants, and beer-gardens, where people can assemble to eat and drink, play dominoes, read the newspapers, hear music, and chatter, and flirt—just as their

age, their fancy, or their idleness impels them. Thus Rotten Row offers no inducements whatever, except the equestrian displays of the too evanescent summer, to attract sightseers. Paris and Vienna, on the contrary, cater for the amusement of their lively citizens and citizenesses all the year round, and never offer such a spectacle of loneliness and desertion even in the depth of winter as is presented by Rotten Row in the eight or nine months when nobody is supposed to be in London, except the four millions or so of trading and toiling people, who are considered to be nobodies by the fair ladies and idle gentlemen who form the oligarchy of fashionable society.

When I first in my boyhood became acquainted with Rotten Row, when London and the suburbs which now form an integral portion of it were inhabited only by a million and a half of people, I often wondered to myself, as I wended my way to a morning or evening dip in the neighbouring Serpentine, why it should be called Rotten! But I was not a philologist. The subject, however, remained seed-like in my mind, dormant and quiescent, but capable of growth and expansion under propitious circumstances. One day, not very long ago, the inquiry came back upon me during a conversation in an afternoon's stroll in Hyde Park, and forward to the far more beautiful Kensington Gardens, with a French gentleman and scholar, to whom I was endeavouring to do the honours of the metropolis. He spoke but little English, but quite enough to understand the English meaning of Rotten Row, which he confidently asserted to be a corruption of the French "*Route du Roi*," or the King's highway. That explanation set me thinking. It was plausible, but not convincing, inasmuch as etymologically it failed to account for the middle syllable, "*en*," in Rotten—though it approached nearly enough to the initial syllable in "*rot*," and the final syllable in "*row*"—by the French "*route*" and "*roi*." But the "*en*" was a stumbling-block to the unqualified acceptance of the derivation.

I had long been of opinion that this celebrated Row or road enjoyed a monopoly of the epithet Rotten; but as soon as I began to investigate the subject, I found that there were many Rotten Rows in England and in Scotland, which had been called by that name from time immemorial; that there were, in fact, three roads so named in Northumberland—one at Aln-

wick, one at Barnborough, and one at Elsdon. There is another near Jedburgh, called "Rattan Raw;" another, also called "Rattan Raw," at Lauder, in the county of Berwick; and three others, of which the names are pronounced after the London fashion, and which are severally to be found in Glasgow, Dunfermline, and Forfarshire.

Of course there must be some reason for the name so widely spread, if we could but discover it; and antiquaries and philologists have done their best, but with comparatively little success, to throw light upon the subject. That all these places are, or have been, "roads" or "highways"—and, perhaps, byways—is evident.

Acting upon, and following out this clue, some etymologists have come to the conclusion of my French friend, that Rotten Row is a corruption of the French "route du Roi," given to such thoroughfares after the Norman Conquest, when French became the language of the Court and the governing classes of England. But Norman French was never the language of the Scottish Court or people, and cannot be held to account for the several Rotten Rows and "Raddan Rohs" which exist in Scottish topographical nomenclature.

Another school of inquirers, finding that the name was in existence for centuries previous to the Norman invasion, think that the origin is in the Celtic "Rathad an Righ," pronounced "Rahad an ree," which has the same meaning as the French "route du Roi," from "rathad" or "raad," a road, and "Righ," a King.

And here the controversy between rival etymologists seems to have subsided—if such wars of words can ever be held to have finally subsided, as long as the daily journals or "Notes and Queries" are willing to open their columns for discussions.

There is, however, a third possible explanation of the puzzling words, which has never yet been offered to the consideration or the criticism of philologists—even of such high priests of etymology as occupy themselves at the meetings of the British Association with the not very important subject of the original Asiatic habitat of the birch and beech trees, and of the Aryan roots of their names. It would be curious if, after all, "Rotten Row," a name which has been applied to at least forty—some will have it, fifty-seven—roads or parts of road in the British Isles, was of Hindustani origin, and could be traced to the very

ancient language now spoken in India, and to the Sanscrit which is no longer spoken, but which has left as many traces behind it in the modern speech of the Indian as the dead Latin has left in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English. That all the languages of modern Europe are largely imbued with Oriental words—Persian, Hindustani, Turkish, and Arabic, as well as Kymric and Keltic—and are varieties of one common and vastly more ancient speech than either Latin or even Sanscrit, is evident to all scholars who have studied the new science of comparative philology. Many hundreds of examples of the fact might be adduced if need were; though the following, cited at random and from memory, may be found sufficient to prove the Eastern origin of many of the commonest words in the English language.

Among others are, "bairn," young, newly born, the English and Scottish "bairn," a child; "tala," a meadow, or low-lying ground, the English dale, and the German "thal;" "chalan," custom, trade, invoice—the French "chaland," a customer, and "achalander," to bargain, to negotiate; "danta," a tooth, the Latin "dens," the French "dent," and the English dentist; "haik," a horse, the Gaelic "each," the Latin "equus," the English hack, the French "haquenée;" "kon," a corner, the French "coin," the old English "coign," as in Shakespeare's phrase, "a 'coign' of vantage;" "pad," the foot, the French "pas," the English path, the Latin "pes;" "dinar," money, the Italian "dinari," the French "denier;" "tana," to stretch, the root of extend, extension, and many other derivatives; "gul," a water-course, a runnel, the English gully.

The list of such Oriental roots in our common English speech, might, if exhaustive, fill many pages of ALL THE YEAR ROUND; but as the case does not require a superabundance of proof, I come to the main point which I wish to suggest—that the apparently absurd epithet of Rotten Row is of Aryan and Hindustani origin, and that it formed part of the language spoken by the first Oriental immigrants who subdued and peopled Europe, as modern Europeans have subdued and peopled the two American continents.

In Hindustani, "rad" signifies a road, "den," fitting or capable, and "rah," a wheel; whence "Rad-den-rah," a wheel road or a road capable, fit, or laid out for the passage of vehicles on wheels, as well

as for foot passengers and equestrians; that is to say, a high-road for general traffic.

The learned Camden — no great philological authority, though respectable as a historian and topographer — derives the word from "rotteran," to muster, whence "rot," a file of six soldiers. This is quoted by the author of "The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable," with the additional comment that "the Norman Rotten Row was the way by which corpses were carried to avoid the public thoroughfares!" or that it was so called from the soft material with which the road was covered!

Whether the French "route du Roi," the Keltic "rod an righ," or the Hindustani "rad den rah" be really the explanation of the epithet of Rotten Row, it is quite clear that either of them is more likely to be correct than Camden's etymology derived from the file of soldiers, or the later one derived from the passage of funeral convoys, or the softness of the unpaved road which affords safe footing for the trots or gallops of the steeds ridden by the fair ladies of the present day.

Will no philologist of unquestionable authority hold up a lantern to throw a light on the darkness of the Rotten Row question? By so doing he would interest a far larger portion of the general public than he can hope to do while discussing the birch and beech in Asia.

Let Mr. Max Müller, for instance, speak out on this question, and if he does not instruct and amuse many of the fair daughters and blooming matrons of the aristocracy who frequent the pleasant pathway of the Row, or road, which is not "rotten," he will have a chance of doing so, for which not only they, but the students of the archaeology of language, will be grateful, or, at all events, will have cause to be so.

There are, however, many reasons for believing that the language of the early inhabitants of Great Britain before it was conquered and partly occupied by the Romans gave names, which are still retained in London and the provinces, to many civic and rural landmarks and places of public note and resort. The Old Bailey, in London, derives its name in all probability from the Keltic "Baille," a town. Ludgate was probably so named from "Lud," the people — and not from the mythical King Lud; Billingsgate, from a temple which stood upon the spot for the observance of the Druidical homage paid

to Bel, or Baal — one of the names of the sun; Greenwich, from "Grian," another name of the sun, and "wic," a corner, the site in early times, as it remains to this day, of an observatory for the study of the heavenly bodies. Snow Hill, known by that name no more, which was no more snowy than any other part of London, but which, in early times, was called "Snnadh" Hill, or beautiful hill, when it formed a part of the primitive city; Snowdon in Wales, and Snowdon, the ancient name of what has long been known as the beautiful little city of Stirling in Scotland, derived their names from the same Keltic source. The gloomy-looking building called Dane John in Canterbury, the name of which has puzzled etymologists who look no deeper than to the Teutonic sources of the English now spoken, is an evident corruption of the Keltic "Dun," a fortress, or hill, and "dion," pronounced "jion," security; and must have been erected originally as a protection to the city, and formed a part of some fortification long since demolished. From these etymological examples of the ancient prevalence in the British Isles of the Keltic and Aryan speech of the early inhabitants, the probability is that the name of Rotten Row is of the same venerable parentage.

CROSSES.

IN old England crosses were almost as common as milestones. Wherever there was a pilgrimage place the roads leading to it were planted with them, as nowadays the roads leading to some local centre are planted with telegraph-poles.

You do not see them in the Eastern Counties; where probably most of them were of wood, as suitable stone was not forthcoming, and where the successive swarms of Flemings, Walloons, and Protestant French had no love for the symbol which their persecutors professed to reverence, and would doubtless help to get rid of it. But in the Midlands you find many, besides the Eleanor crosses, of which Northamptonshire contains two; in Gloucestershire there are several — Iron Acton, for instance; in the North, many. And in Cornwall almost every churchyard has one, besides a large number along both highways and byways.

Nowhere else in Europe is there such a series — some sepulchral, some boundary-

stones, some guide-marks. And so many of them are of such an early date, belonging to a time of which, in Europe north of the Alps, there are very few Christian remains at all.

Why is this? Partly because of the excellence of our stone; partly because—paradox though it seems—of our thorough change in religion. What did escape the spoiler had not to suffer the killing with kindness which has been the fate of too many similar remains in Roman Catholic countries.

Compare an English parish church which has not suffered from the restorer, but which has simply been scraped from the protecting whitewash of "the dark ages of architecture," with a French or German church. In Protestant Germany most churches have been bared of all that could connect them with the past; in France and Catholic Germany the old work has often been overlaid with modern accretions.

The same with other monuments. What poor things, for instance, the wayside crosses of the Eifel are, compared with ours. Here there is no excuse; the volcanic tuff is as easily carved as cheese, yet, at every turn, you have not crosses at all, but rough-made stones in which a little cupboard is sunk, and inside it a doll, or a small wax-work Crucifixion, or something equally tawdry. But this happy neglect of our early Christian monuments does not account for such a large percentage of our crosses belonging to pre-Norman times.

The reason for that is that all Scotland, and England north of the Thames, and also west of Mendip, was Christianised, not by Augustine and his followers, but by Scotie—that is, Irish—missionaries, who, of course, brought Scotie art with them; and this art, somehow, ran more to sculpture than to architecture. In Ireland, before Strongbow, there was little stone building except the enigmatic "round towers;" but there was a vast deal of stone carving.

Out of the whole number of crosses in the United Kingdom, five-sixths are in Ireland; far the most splendid, too. Do not let the tourists who this year, roused by what they see at Olympia, will throng over to "the sister island," be satisfied with studying "those palatial edifices the union workhouses," and the police barracks with their iron shutters; let them go with a guide-book in hand, and read before they go some book like Dr. Anderson's "Scotland in Early Christian Times,"

—more than half of which is about Ireland—or Romilly Allen's "Early Christian Symbolism."

Such crosses as Kells and Monasterboice, and Clonmacnois and Tuam, are not to be seen elsewhere in Europe. Irish people care too little for them. There is too much political gas being always let loose over there for people to care much about such unexciting things as archæology. And yet Irish art, like everything else in that island, has been made a cause of battle. Is this interlaced ornament, which marks the "opus scoticum," whether in the illuminated manuscript, or the crozier, or brooch, or book-cover, or the stone cross or carved grave-stone, home-grown, or was it transmitted to Ireland from the East, through Byzantium—of course by way of Gaul? Partly the one and partly the other. Such interlaced work (none of it so rich and beautiful as the Irish) is found in many parts of the world, and was doubtless independently invented in several places. It is found in Byzantine work, and also in old Scandinavian—"transmitted," says one party, "to the North from Constantinople; those sea-rovers picked up all sorts of good things in their wanderings;" "learnt from the Irish," says the other party, "Norse and Irishmen having been for centuries closely linked in Ireland and in the Western Isles. Burnt Nial of the Saga was half an Irishman; and they taught the Norsemen carving, just as the others taught them to substitute the heavy bill, or battle-axe, for the light leaf-shaped sword which was the old Irish weapon." Who can tell which is right? The Runic (Norse) crosses, of which there are so many in the Isle of Man, have several of them the Irish key-pattern, or interlaced cord or serpent work. Miss Stokes, a great authority, whose "Handbook of Early Irish Christian Art," published by South Kensington, every intending tourist should read, says this knot-work and interlaced pattern is found at Ravenna (where Byzantine influence lingered long—the "exarchs" were Lords Lieutenant of the Constantinople Emperors), in the older Lombard churches, and in those of Georgia. Others find nothing in this similarity except that man's mind and wit are a good deal the same all the world over; "even the twinings and twistings which cover the Mexican carved stones may be called interlaced work, yet no one imagines any transmission from Ireland to Mexico," or, vice versâ. Well, wherever

this Irish work came from, there's plenty of it in England. A good deal passes for "Saxon," and some is assigned to the Danes; but no doubt it came over with the Irish missionaries.

Now, of this unique series of remains the United Kingdom takes absolutely no care. There is one cast of a Cumberland cross in South Kensington; that is all. Yet we heap together "marbles" from Cyprus, from India, from the ends of the earth; while our own far more interesting carved stones—the things that our forefathers revered—are left uncared for to the tender mercies of the farmer.* One or two were set up, years ago, at the Crystal Palace, but that is not a museum; and surely any other nation would have in the national museum a selection of casts of the best of these crosses, Irish, English, and Scottish. Things of this kind need arrangement, and a handbook to explain; and the good effect on our hideous tombstones may be measured by the good already done since some attention has been paid to these old monuments.

Well, our crosses are, speaking generally, of three kinds: the rude pillar stone marked with a cross, generally small, and in some cases later than the lettering (at Silion, in Cardigan, the cross partly destroys the inscription; and tradition says that Patrick and other Irish saints never passed a pillar-stone without carving a cross upon it); the sepulchral slab, with more or less ornate cross or other carving; the upright cross, like those at Cottingham (dated 651), and Bewcastle (dated 670), and Yarm (with Irish spiral work), and the grand carved cross at Ruthwell, just over the Solway, in Dumfries, to the memory of one of King Oswiu's sons.

Of the first kind there are a hundred and twenty-one in Ireland, a hundred and seven in Wales, five in Scotland, thirty in Cornwall and Devon; none in any other part of England. Of pillar-stones there is no lack in England—those at Stanton Harcourt, near Oxford, for instance, marking the place (says the legend) where three British Kings were killed in the defeat which opened all the Upper Thames valley to the invaders.

* The farmer is not their worst foe. Not ten years ago the Rector of Drumcliff, in Sligo, found an English geologist hammering away at the beautifully carved cross in his parish. When remonstrated with, the man of science got in a rage. What was a mere Irish cross compared with a good specimen of a trilobite? Remonstrance was no use, "Science" was superior to Art. The Rector had to watch the enemy off the parish.

But, except in the two south-western counties, none are cross-marked. Indeed, throughout England, Christian remains of the Roman and Romano-British period—to which this class of stone would belong—are so rare that some archæologists think Christianity can have made very little progress before the Romans left the island.

Besides the pillar-stones of Devon and Cornwall, the only cross-marked remains of earlier date than 401—when the Romans went—are the tessellated pavements at Frampton, near Dorchester, discovered in 1794, and carefully described by old Lysons. These contain, amid Neptune and his tritons, and other heathen devices, the X P (chi rho), or sacred monogram which Constantine was warned by an angel to inscribe on his soldiers' shields and on his imperial pennon before fighting his heathen rival, Maxentius, in 312. The same monogram is stamped on a bit of Samian ware found at Catterick Bridge, and now in Sir Wilfrid Lawson's museum. The third example is doubtful. Londoners may remember the controversy when, nineteen years ago, in levelling the ground north of Westminster Abbey, there was found under an old wall a sarcophagus with a cross on the lid, and a Roman inscription, which was shown by the shape of the letters to belong to about the end of the third century, on the side.

Does the lid belong to the rest of the coffin? If so, this is the oldest instance in the world of the sepulchral use of the cross; the tomb of Anicius Probus in St. Peter's, Rome, is no earlier than 395. But there is just a doubt whether it is not a case of re-interment. The stone of both lid and coffin is the same, but the cross may have been carved later; and, as nothing was found inside but a skeleton and a few bits of tile, who can tell?

A pillar-stone, then, may be of any date. It was a heathen way of commemorating an event or marking a great man's burial-place. At the foot of some of those in West Cornwall have been found urns. Thus, a pillar near "the Gump"—a wild moor north-east of "Chun Castle," near which is the dolmen known as Chun Quoit—yielded one of those fine large urns occasionally found in the district. Clumsy workmen broke it literally into a thousand fragments; but, by the skilful pains of the late John Millett, Esq. and his wife, it was pieced together, and is now in the Penzance Museum.

Of the next class, cross-marked slabs undoubtedly marking Christian burial, none can be proved older than the ninth century. Of course, negative testimony does not settle the matter; but of one hundred and seventy-nine such slabs at the great burial-place of Clonmacnois, on the Shannon, eighty-one are dated—that is, we know from the Irish chronicles when the men died whose names are carved upon them. These range between A.D. 628 and 1273, but all the Clonmacnois crosses earlier than A.D. 806 are unornamented. If, therefore, the Ruthwell and other North-country crosses are rightly dated, they are earlier than anything in Ireland. About the date of the fine cross at Hackness, not far from Whitby, there is no question: unless set up long after the event it commemorates, it must be earlier than A.D. 773. Of slab crosses, perhaps the most beautiful, and one of the earliest dated, is that at Tullylease ("the hillock of the huts"), in the north of County Cork. The cross is covered with a diagonal key-pattern, and in the four corners are spiral-work circles. The inscription, in Irish "minuscules," (not capitals) is, "Quicumque hunc titulū legerit oret pro Berechtuir." Now, Saint Berechtir was one of the three sons of a Saxon King, who, along with others, gave to Colman, the Irish Bishop of Lindisfarne, and with him retired to Ireland, when King Oswiu so ungratefully deserted him at the Synod of 664 and went over to Wilfrid of York, who was bringing in the Roman rite. The cross, therefore, unless it replaces an earlier one, must be pretty early in the eighth century. But rude pillar stones and slab crosses, while most valuable as links in the chain of British monuments, are not very interesting to the mere tourist. What he should look for, whether in Great Britain or Ireland, are the upright crosses, of which at Llantwit Major, in Glamorgan—the "Llan," or sacred enclosure, of Saint Illtudus—there are two splendid examples (in the church), probably about A.D. 850. There is a similar cross, with very rich Scotie work, at Margam, in the same county, bearing the specially Irish formula: "Ennian made this cross of Christ for Guogoret's soul."

At Sandbach, in Cheshire, are two market-crosses, one of which has a curious carving of the Crucifixion, the Christ being clothed after the Saxon type, with only a waist-cloth; whereas on the Irish crosses—and on those in Great Britain of Scotie

(that is, Irish) type—the Christ is always clothed in a garment reaching to the ankles (Rev. i. 13). Sometimes this is embroidered; in the Athlone bronze, now in the Royal Irish Academy's Museum, besides the embroidery, there is a spiral-work breast-plate, reminding one of the other words in Revelation: "Girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

The most elaborate instance of this ornamented Crucifixion garb is on a slab cross in the old chapel on the Calf of Man. This is not Norse, like most of the very numerous Manx crosses, but clearly Scotie; and not the body of the robe only, but the long sleeves and head-dress, are covered with every kind of spiral, key-pattern, knot-work—the whole scene being as much conventionalised as it is even in the most typical Irish manuscripts (I name the Psalter of St. John's, Cambridge, as one of the most accessible). It is curious to note a gradual shortening of the Lord's robe in so-called "Saxon" sculptures. On a slab at Daglingworth, in Gloucestershire, it reaches well below the knees; at Ramsey Abbey it is considerably above them. In contrast with this conventionalism—which in some Scotie manuscripts reaches such a point that the ears of the Lord are turned into beautiful spirals, the result being something like the fanciful Mexican carving—is the realism which depicts the blood from the Christ's side striking the eye of the soldier that pierced Him.

Of the thirty high crosses at present remaining in Ireland, be sure to see those at Clonmacnois (where, as was said, there is a whole series of slabs and uprights from A.D. 628 to 1273, after which date the barbarism resulting from the repeated English invasions almost put a stop to artistic work); those at Monasterboice (near Drogheda—what a wonderful two days you may have exploring the Boyne battlefield, visiting the New Grange tumuli, and studying the three crosses!). See also those at Tuam, and at Kells. Cong (quaint little town on Lough Corrib, with a river that flows underground through grand caves), gives its name to a famous gold cross (date 1132) which is not there, but in the Royal Irish Society's Museum. These are enough to show that the idea of the Crucifixion (and probably of vicarious sacrifice) impressed itself very strongly on the Gaelic mind from the eighth century onward. For all these are not crosses only, but crucifixes; it is one thing to

stamp a cross on your own gravestone, or on somebody else's memorial stone, and quite another to set up a carving of the scene on Calvary. We may, without being fanciful, roughly divide Christian symbolism into three eras; the earliest (Roman mostly) in which the favourite subjects are Daniel among the lions, as a type of Christ the Good Shepherd, etc. Then in the fourth century come in the pictures of the Lord's bodily suffering as apart from the objects for which the death was undergone; and yet (as on the Athlone bronze) often strangely mixing with the present suffering the glory which was to be hereafter; this is so largely represented in Irish work that we may almost call it a Celtic development. With the Christianising of the northern nations comes in a new subject—the tortures of the damned, and such like, so frequently treated of in later mediæval art.

Of the two perfect crosses at Monasterboice, the greater is twenty-seven feet high; the smaller, which is as perfect as when it left the sculptor's hand, measures fifteen feet. Note the sharpness of the work, and the beauty of execution of the numerous figures. These are important as showing the Irish costumes, lay and clerical, early in the tenth century—a thing to be borne in mind by those who look on the early Irish as a set of savages, who had not even the woad with which the old Britons adorned themselves. The carving on the Kells cross is much rougher (worse stone, for one thing). On the Christ's head sits a bird, probably the Holy Ghost. Above the Christ in Glory (a subject on most Irish high crosses), who holds in one hand the cross of His passion, in the other the floriated sceptre of His triumph, is "a lamb as it had been slain." On both this and the lesser Monasterboice cross is figured the Temptation. The Adoration of the Magi (the only example in Irish art) is given at Monasterboice; at Kells, David tearing the heart out of the lion, from whom he has already rescued a lamb; in both Isaac's sacrifice—at Monasterboice Abraham with beard and long moustache, as Adam also is in the Temptation. At Kells, both Adam and Abraham have smooth faces. The most curious of the Kells sculptures is Daniel, a colossal figure, bound with what in Irish is called "the three smalls"—small of back, wrists, and ankles—and licked affectionately by two lions. Just below are the three children in the furnace, out of which the flames are

leaping on the men who feed it with extra logs.

Moone Abbey, near Athay, in Kildare, has a splendid granite cross, thirteen feet high, with many sculptures—amongst them a much more uncomfortably situated Daniel. Round him six lions stand, open-mouthed and snarling.

On the cross at Meigle, in Perthshire, there are four lions; Daniel is stroking two of them, and two are affectionately licking him. Another Irish cross, at Castle-dermot, in the same county as Moone Abbey, has a very quaint sculpture of the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

The bird with a round cake in its mouth flying down between two men holding pastoral staves—seated in one, standing in the other of the two Kells crosses—is supposed to represent Saint Paul and Saint Anthony, according to the legend, breaking bread in the desert. But it is needless to say more about the details of these sculptures; there is nothing else in Europe like them; they have not the beauty of the frieze of the Parthenon, but they should have for us an interest which no other sculptures can have. They show the feeling of our forefathers in both islands respecting the highest things, and how far they were able to express that feeling on stone. Let every visitor to Ireland see some of them. Ardbreacan Cross, at Olympia, is all very well as a whet to curiosity, but it is far from being one of the best.

Kells (after which is named "the Book," finest of Irish illuminated manuscripts, now in Trinity College, Dublin, Library), is in many ways worth a visit; so still more is Monasterboice—or rather Drogheda, to which it is very near. Of books there are Dr. Anderson's aforesaid, O'Neill's "Irish Crosses;" and for England Lyson's, and "The Old Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England." Stuart's "Sculptured Stones" is also an excellent book. But to the mere tourist, his "Murray" will give all he wants—will point him to the fine cross of Eyam, in Derbyshire, for instance, and to the still remaining Eleanor crosses, which the art-critic will contrast with the Irish work a century earlier.

Plenty has been written on the subject: an interest in it is what is wanting. There are many people to whom an old cross is just three or four bits of carved stone and nothing more; they would not go half-a-mile out of their way to see the finest that the United Kingdom has to show. Others, again, think them "rem-

nants of a debasing superstition," and would not lift a finger to save them from the hands of the farmer, or of that more dangerous foe the geologist.

But those who hold that there is a connection between the progress of a nation and its mind as expressed in art will draw, and photograph, and study, and compare any crosses they may come across. They will be astonished at the number, and delighted with the quaint richness of very many of them.

FROM AFRICA, DIRECT.

QUIET and tranquil is the aspect of the docks this sunshiny morning. The long lines of wharves and warehouses are but thinly tenanted; the forest of masts which once might have been seen about here has marched off bodily, like Birnam Wood, and what remains is but a grove—a sprinkling of ships, with here and there a barge; while, on the smooth surface of the water, a sailor sculling a ship's boat from wharf to wharf is making more disturbance than any other object in the scene.

The east wind which has been blowing so persistently these many weeks has something to do with this abnormal quietude. The big sailing-ships, homeward bound, hang in the Chops of the Channel; and there they may hang, beating to and fro like Vanderdecken on his last voyage, for any prospect of a propitious change. So long has the wind sat in this particular quarter, east-north-east, a flavour of iceberg mingled with the sterile breath of the desert, that the weather-vane on the pier-head seems to have rusted in that position, and takes no notice of any false, deceptive puffs and twists of wind from other quarters. But, alas! from whatever point the wind may blow, it will never bring back that cloud of white sails, that tangled forest of masts and rigging, that came and went with wind and tide.

Still, there are sailing-ships—here is a dock that holds twenty or more—Australian liners, with topmasts struck, and spars pointing in all directions; ships that make the long voyage out by the Cape of Good Hope, and sometimes run homewards by way of dreary Cape Horn; stout and speedy ships, with no engines to rust nor boilers to burst, and with no steam-winch to exasperate the nerves, but where everything is done with the good old "Yo, heave ho!" as

blocks rattle, and ropes are hauled, and the wind whistles in the rigging.

Perhaps, after all, the sailing-ship has still a future. Steam has done its best, or its worst, but it has not yet knocked all the primitive forces of nature out of time. There are still the wind that blows and the ship that goes; and you can have the wind for nothing, while steam costs so much a pound-pressure. Anyhow, here are ships taking in cargo, others fitting up their 'tween-decks with bunks and berths for emigrants, one or two with the Blue Peter flying, and crews already on board, while the Captain is making up his accounts with the ship's husband, and passengers are talking to their friends who have come to take a last look at them. For the passengers who go in sailing-ships are generally away for a life-time.

But with all this the place is still tranquil and quiet; the steam cranes are silent; the winches are at rest; the knot of labourers gathered outside the dock gates is greater in number than those who are actively employed within; there are no trucks rolling about the tram-lines; no fussy locomotives threaten to overwhelm the loiterer. For all this worry and trouble you must go to the newer docks, which lie further down the river.

Then the scene changes; a little further, and we reach the outer basin of the East India Docks. Here the world moves again at the rattling pace of steam. A great steamship is loading in the basin: chains are rattling; the donkey-engine is at work; crates and cases are swinging high over head, or whirling downwards into the cavernous hold of the big ship. A string of carts and vans are drawn up in the road that leads to the wharf; cases, packages, crates, are lying in piles upon the warehouse floor. All these things are for Africa; it is the Cape mail steamer which is lying alongside. She bears the name of one of our historic castles, and like a floating castle she towers over the dock-side. Her bridge, her wheel-house, her huge funnels, her deck cabins, her swinging boats, the great ventilating shafts, the derricks, the whirling machinery—all this gives an impression of the complicated structure of this floating castle, an ocean steamer of the modern type, with the force and strength to face the fiercest storm, and yet capable of providing all the amenities of civilized life for hundreds upon hundreds of guests, with a table such as was never spread in the most hospitable

of the castles of old ; while the whole vast structure can be handled like a cock-boat under the direction of one guiding will.

But not for us the outward mail steamer, although the temptation is not small to leave behind the east-north-east and the half-hearted sunshine for the orange groves of Lisbon, or the mild, soothing breezes of Madeira ; or, perhaps, to touch at the Grand Canaries, with a flying visit to St. Helena, and a glimpse at Longwood and the empty grave of Napoleon, and then, sighting the shores of the Great Dark Continent, to drop anchor in Table Bay, with Cape Town shining forth from its tropic groves, with the vast bulk of the Table Mountains rising behind. And, sailing still onward you may make acquaintance with the English settlements along the coast, with Port Elizabeth and East London—not so closely packed as this East London of ours—with Natal, and Portuguese Delagoa Bay. Ah! then, to be five-and-twenty once more, with a light heart and a strong pair of arms ; and hey for the goldfields ! Or, there is the land of wool for those who would be gentle shepherds, or the land of ostriches for those of a more feather-brained turn ; and the open veldt stretches far away into those undiscovered regions about which still hangs the glamour of mystery and doubt. This way, too, for East Africa, for Inhambane, Chiloane, Quillimane, and Mozambique—names which recall the sonorous roll of Milton's epic, as he describes the kingdoms of the world stretched beneath the prophetic eye of the great patriarch Adam.

But all these regions to which the gangway of the big steamer invites us—a flying bridge which unites such distant climes—these regions brought so strangely near to the imagination by the sight of the ship which will so soon be on its way thither—now fade into the distance. For our way is to the pier-head, not to speed the parting ship, but to welcome the approaching one.

Her homeward voyage has been watched for by many friendly eyes. Out of two or three hundred passengers, how few there are who have not a friend or two to take an interest in their arrival, all the way from Africa ; and to these friends for a few weeks the "mail and shipping" news in the morning papers has assumed a new interest and significance. From port to port the vessel's progress has been traced : now she has touched at St. Helena ; anon she is telegraphed from Madeira ; and after that

it is not many days before you read, half-awake, perhaps, as the morning news-sheet is brought to the complaining sluggard : "Plymouth.—The ——— Castle from East Africa and the Cape. Landed mails and passengers, and proceeded for London." And indeed ere long the postman with his sharp double knock drops into the letter-box your correspondence from Madagascar and Mozambique. There is a scrawl, too, from your brother-in-law, Jack Brown, written at Plymouth, on board ship : "Meet me at the docks, old chap, and help us along with Kittie and the children."

There is no time to be lost, for with the steamer at Plymouth yesterday, she will be in the docks to-day.

Thus it is we find ourselves on the pier-head of the East India Dock, the water still low, but the tide fairly turned, and making up the river, charged with incoming fleets. The grand old river lies before us, with a steely glitter on its ripples, the wide reach of turbid waters shut in below by the low hills of the Kentish shore, while above it is lost in the vague haze that encompasses the Isle of Dogs. There is the stretch of wharf close at hand, the piles and timbers rising high above the tide, with river steamers touching and departing ; the square, solid railway-station, and more flimsy buildings scattered about ; with a low marshy shore opposite, jagged with the roofs of shanties and rough buildings of all kinds.

With the freshening tide come a whole fleet of hay-boats, spreading their great red sails to the wind ; and river tugs, with long lines of barges trailing after them, travel noisily along. Then, out of a cloud of smoke and steam, comes the great, floating castle, with a busy tug at hand to help it round the corners. She stops, and the white steam rushes forth with a mighty roar.

Now the tug begins to justify its name, and, with a hawser on shore and the tug hauling away, the big ship soon swings round, her long journey come to an end ; and thus she forges slowly towards the dock-head, while flying hand-lines threaten to decapitate unwary spectators, and huge hawsers are hauled ashore and taken a turn or two round the big iron drums which are set in motion by hydraulic power ; and so, with a haul here, and a pull there, the iron wall of the ship glides against the wooden wall of the dock, and the word may be given, "Alongside." Alongside, but not

inside; for there is not as yet depth enough of water in the river to float her into her berth.

By this time, as may be supposed, the ship's passengers have put themselves in evidence. There are rows of faces looking over the bulwarks; people are clustering behind the poop, or looking out from the saloon deck; children are scampering up and down, and clambering about, looking with all their eyes at the scene about them. Perhaps it is not very much to see, this Blackwall Reach, with its low shores and ragged edge of wharves and storehouses; its suggestions of "England, home, and beauty" may be rather indirect ones; still, it is home all the same—the old motherland, that opens her arms to her returning wanderers.

Now that faces can be recognised on board and ashore, people are looking anxiously about for signs of recognition. But the boat is before her time (the biggest steamer in the world would be but a "boat" in sea-going vernacular), and as the boat has come alongside so unexpectedly early there are not many here to meet her. There are rough, weather-beaten faces forward—men who look like miners and diggers, and of whom one would like to ask how they fared out yonder, and whether they have made a pile, or whether they have come home with just what they carry on their backs. There are babes in arms, too, and brown nurses, with pleasant aquiline features; tall, military figures; women in all kinds of wraps; but everybody browned and sallow by the sun.

Thickest of all is the cluster about the captain's cabin, where that son of the sea, with a jolly, smiling face, stands at the door holding a regular levée, as passengers come up one after the other to congratulate him on the speedy passage, to shake hands, and bid good-bye.

Before long a gangway has been rigged up between shore and ship, and a detachment of official people go on board—Custom-house officers with lanterns and note-books, who perhaps are going to rummage the boat from stem to stern, though what they expect to find in the way of contraband from Africa it would be hard to say. Do they manufacture eau-de-Cologne at the gold-diggings, or is Zululand famous for its liqueurs? And then some one suggests tobacco. Yes, they do grow tobacco, these Africans, along the south coast, and we shall presently be smoking our Cape cigars, and honey-dew from East

London; but it is not much of an article of commerce as yet. And after the Customs marches a detachment of dock labourers, each with a badge on his arm, and "Baggage" marked thereon in red letters, the envy of the unemployed who are waiting on the chance of a job at the dock-gates. And now there is a chance for passengers who are in a hurry to reach boat or train to land and get away. Here is a young fellow who has come from Africa with only a portmanteau to worry him, which he slings on his shoulder, and so away till he meets the policeman at the gate, who examines critically his baggage-pass, questions its completeness, calls in the advice of his superior officer, and finally lets the youth go rejoicing—happy youth! who catches a train next moment, and is hurried off to Fenchurch Street.

The next to emerge are three jolly souls, brown and ruddy and stout, who scamper down the planks like so many schoolboys; and catching a friend by the arm, a friend also ruddy and stout, who has just come to meet them, they all dart off on a bee-line—whither? We will hazard a shrewd guess that the bee-line points in the direction of the nearest "pub," and that one and all mean a drink in the freedom and luxuriance of an English bar. It is an amiable weakness that, shared by many who have long been exiled from their native land. It is an example, too, which Jack Brown might be tempted to follow, who has recognised his brother-in-law by this time, and helped to haul him over the ship's side. But here his wife's sisters come fluttering along from who knows where, and there is such a general kissing and laughing and crying, such hugging of the children and squeezing of that latest African product, the baby, that the male spectators stand by abashed, and repent of their first hasty impulses. And, apart from such impulses, Jack is in no hurry to go ashore. "It is like breaking up your home and being turned adrift in the world," he says, and he watches his piles of baggage, as they accumulate, with a heavy heart.

While we have been talking, the tide, which waits for no man, has been making up for lost time; foot after foot, it has swallowed up the figures on the gauge by the outer sill of the dock. There is seven-and-twenty feet by the mark outside, and within the dock-gates the water is only three feet higher.

"She'll do now," cries the harbour

master, who has now taken the command, and the dock attendants run to open the sluices; and before long, with the rise of the tide, the river is higher than the dock, and pushes gently against the great iron gates; and the tug, which we thought had gone home again, makes its appearance once more and takes the floating castle by the stern, and the drums on shore revolve and haul away at her head till her nose is fairly within the dock walls, and we only wait for the gates to swing open before us. The lovely Thames water, imprisoned in that dock for twelve hours, has deposited such a thickness of sediment against the dock gates that a pressure of a dozen tons or so on the square inch—or maybe on the square foot—fails to move them; but, with backing and stopping, and then taking a run, the hydraulic machinery manages the business at last, and all is clear in front of us.

"Now then, steamer!" cries the man at the handles of the hydraulic pump. He does not mean us; we are only a "boat." But, obedient to his call, the little "Mosquito," the harbour tug, runs forward, and, laying hold of a hawser, pulls away till she almost pulls herself out of the water, and in we go, like a cork into the neck of a bottle. We squeeze a few fat and rosy "fenders" into the shape of pancakes on the passage, and then we are fairly bottled; and, with more hauling of hawsers, and with now a pull and now a push from the hardy little "Mosquito," we are fairly secured in our berth.

And now the voyage is indeed finished; and after the ease and tranquillity of the ocean voyage, where there were no cares and troubles, and every want was attended to—sooner or later—now comes the struggle and push and elbowing of life ashore. A great slide is run out, and the huge piles of baggage are run quickly ashore and into the shelter of a roomy warehouse. And here the late passengers assemble and gossip for awhile, shake hands with the comrades and friends of a voyage, and collect their belongings. Everything is arranged alphabetically, and Brown finds all his lumber accumulating under a big letter B; and then, through the warehouse door, you get a glimpse of a quiet dock-side street, with cabs waiting and driving off.

And this is the gate of the great White Man's Land, the door of communication between England and Africa.

STARLIGHT DREAMS.

EIGHTEEN years ago, John Tyndall delivered, before the British Association at Liverpool, a most remarkable discourse, "The Scientific Use of the Imagination," in which he says: "There are Tories even in science, who regard imagination as a faculty to be feared and avoided, rather than employed. They had observed its action in weak vessels, and were duly impressed by its disasters. But they might with equal justice point to exploded boilers as an argument against the use of steam. Bounded and conditioned by co-operate Reason, imagination becomes the mightiest instrument of the physical discoverer. Newton's passage from a falling apple to a falling moon, was a leap of the imagination. And in much that has been recently said about protoplasm and life, we have the outgoings of the imagination guided and controlled by the known analogies of science. In fact, without this power, our knowledge of nature would be a mere tabulation of coexistences and sequences. We should still believe in the succession of day and night, of summer and winter; but the soul of Force would be dislodged from our universe; causal relations would disappear, and with them that science which is now binding the parts of nature to an organic whole."

In these columns, there is insufficient space to discuss how far imagination has entered into the latest manifestations of science, as propounded in theories of Evolution, the Origin of Species, the Descent of Man, and other doctrines which have obtained wide acceptance. All that is attempted, now, is to direct attention to an example in which Imagination and Science have most conspicuously marched hand in hand.

There are two very prolific French writers who have acquired a prominent and honourable position in literature, by employing science jointly with imagination to accomplish their respective objects, each in a very different manner, and with very different ends in view.

One of them, Jules Verne, is well known here by numerous translations of his strange romances, as well as by spectacular representations, on the Paris stage, of the extraordinary adventures which they recount. Example, "Round the World in Eighty Days." His works may be said to illustrate "The Imaginative Uses of Science." He makes no pretence to inculcate serious

knowledge, but merely to amuse and surprise his readers by the doings of a set of personages and a series of wonderful events impossible under the present condition of things. He must be a bold man to have ventured on so startling a line of fiction; but in his case, as in others, fortune has favoured the brave.

The other, Camille Flammarion, confines himself to facts either actually ascertained or more or less possible or probable, leaving individuals and their fortunes out of the question. He employs no marvellous "dramatis personæ," like Jules Verne's serving man-of-all-work, who could see Jupiter's satellites with the naked eye, and jump from the top of a mountain into the car of a balloon which was passing close by. His voluminous works are not scientific novels, but very striking and attractive instances of the Scientific Use of the Imagination, endeavouring, from the certain knowledge of what really is, to induce a belief in what reasonably may be. He strives to extend our mental vision, and excites us to reflect on what may exist, what mighty events may be occurring far beyond the limits of our earthly ken.

His last production, "*Rêves Étoilés*,"* is a brief but fair specimen of the frame of mind which pervades his previous astronomical speculations. The book, quite small, is not dearer—but much more wholesome—than the cheap reprints of realistic novels now issued. And it will be strange if those who read his "*Starlight Dreams*" are not thereby led to see what he has to say in the eloquent pages of his former volumes.

A dream which has haunted more than one imagination, whether astronomically scientific or not, is the possibility of communication with other worlds outside our own. M. Flammarion begins with the nearest heavenly body, namely, our bright-faced satellite.

Some fifty years ago, the astronomer Littrow, director of the Vienna Observatory, started the idea of effecting an optical communication with the inhabitants of the moon.

A triangle traced on the lunar surface by three luminous lines, each ten or twelve miles long, would be visible here by the aid of our telescopes. We even observe much smaller details; for instance, the singular topographical tracings remarked in the lunar circus to which the name of

Plato has been given. Consequently, a triangle, a square, or a circle of like dimensions constructed by us on some vast plain by means of luminous points, either reflecting the solar light during daytime, or by electric light at night, would be visible by astronomers in the moon, supposing those astronomers to exist and to possess optical instruments equivalent to our own.

The inference is as plain as may be. If we were to observe on the moon a triangle correctly drawn, we should be not a little puzzled. We should either refer it to some optical illusion, or we should ask ourselves whether the chances of geological disturbance could have resulted in the formation of a regular geometrical figure. No doubt we should in the end feel obliged to admit this very exceptional possibility. But if, all at once, we saw the triangle change into a square, and, a few months afterwards, be replaced by a circle, we should then, quite reasonably, allow that an intelligent effect proves an intelligent cause, and we should be led to conclude that those geometrical figures revealed the presence of geometers on the neighbouring world.

From that, to demanding the reason for the formation of those figures on the lunar soil, and inquiring why and with what object our unknown brethren traced them, is only a step very quickly made. Could it be with the hope and intention of entering into communication with us? The hypothesis is not so very absurd.

Why, after all, should not the inhabitants of the moon be more inquisitive, more intelligent than we are? Why should they not suppose that the earth may be inhabited as well as their own little world? And why should not their geometrical signals be made with the object of inquiring whether we really do exist? Moreover, an answer is not difficult. They exhibit a triangle; we can reproduce it here. If they trace a circle, we can do the same. And thus we shall have established a correspondence between earth and sky for the first time since the beginning of the world.

Since geometry is absolutely the same for the inhabitants of every planet, since two and two make four throughout the regions of infinite space, the signals thus exchanged between the earth and the moon would not be more obscure than the hieroglyphics which Champollion succeeded in deciphering. Communication, once ac-

* "*Rêves Étoilés*," Paris, C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, Éditeurs. Prix: 60 centimes.

complished, would soon become regular and productive. The moon, indeed, is close at hand—distant only thirty times the earth's diameter. Many a veteran rural postman has walked as many miles during the course of his official rounds. A telegraphic dispatch would reach it in a second and a quarter.

It must be confessed that, up to the present time, nothing has been remarked on the moon which can betray the existence there of an intelligent race of human beings. Nevertheless, astronomers who specially observe our satellite and perseveringly study its singular aspects, are generally of opinion that this heavenly body is not so utterly dead as it seems. We ought not to forget that, in the actual state of optics, it is difficult to apply to the observation of the moon a magnifying power superior to two thousand. A view of the moon, two thousand times nearer than it is in the heavens, only brings it to a distance from us of one hundred and ten, or one hundred and twenty miles. But what can we distinguish at a distance of one hundred and ten miles? A vast army on the march? A great city? Perhaps, still it is doubtful.

What is certain, is that enigmatical variations are even now taking place on its surface—notably in the area of the circus Plate, already mentioned. What is also certain is, that the lunar globe, forty-nine times smaller than the earth, and eighty-one times lighter, causes weight on its surface to be six times weaker than that which exists on the surface of our planet; so that an atmosphere analogous to that which we breathe, would be six times more rarefied, and difficult to be perceived by us. It is not, therefore, surprising that this neighbouring world should be so widely different to our own. Moreover, beheld from a balloon, at an altitude of only twelve or fifteen thousand feet, the earth appears desert, uninhabited, silent as an enormous cemetery. The traveller who should reach us from the moon in a balloon, might doubt, at that trifling distance, whether there were people in France, or hubbub in Paris.

The death-like aspect of our pale satellite did not offer much encouragement for the realisation of Littrow's original project. Consequently, other speculators allowed their imaginations to fly off to the planet Mars, which, although never nearer to us than fourteen million leagues, is the best known of all the worlds in the sky, and

which bears such a resemblance to the world we live in that, if we were suddenly transported thither, we should hardly feel ourselves out of our element.

The aspect of Mars, in fact, consoles us a little for that of the moon. We might fancy ourselves, really, in some terrestrial region. Continents, seas, islands, shores, peninsulas, capes, gulfs, clouds, rains, inundations, snows, winters and summers, springs and autumns, days and nights—all are there exactly as with us. The years are longer, consisting of six hundred and eighty-seven days, but the intensity of the seasons is absolutely the same as ours, for the inclination of its axis is the same. The days are also a trifle longer, since the diurnal rotation of Mars takes twenty-four hours, thirty-seven minutes, and twenty-three seconds; but the difference is not great. And please note, all this is known with precision. The diurnal rotation, for instance, is determined within the tenth of a second.

When we behold the polar snows on Mars melting in spring, the sharply-cut continents, the mediterranean seas with their deeply indented bays—the whole varied and suggestive geographical configuration—we cannot help asking whether the sun, which illumines Mars as well as the earth, can possibly shine upon no living creature there; whether those rains fecundate nothing; whether there be no live thing—no bird or beast—to breathe the atmosphere; and whether Mars, which rushes so rapidly through space that we can follow its progress from week to week, and even from day to day, is like an express train travelling along a railroad without passengers or merchandise.

The idea that the earth on which we live could revolve, as it does, round the sun, without being inhabited by any animated organism whatsoever, seems so inconsistent that it is difficult to admit its possibility. We cannot conceive that the energies of Nature, which would be as potent there as they are here, should remain eternally inactive and sterile.

But the distance of this planet is so great that, although far superior to the moon in volume, it appears, at its nearest approach to us, sixty-three times smaller. So that a telescope which magnifies only sixty-three times, shows us Mars of the same dimensions as the moon seen by the naked eye. A magnifying power of six hundred and thirty would give us a diameter ten times larger than our satel-

lite's as we behold it with our unaided vision, only, if any attempt were ever made to effect a communication between Mars and ourselves, the signals must evidently be on a much vaster scale than in the case of correspondence with the moon.

But may not the inhabitants of Mars have already taken the initiative? And is it not we who have failed to understand them?

Astronomical instruments were not invented here until the year 1609, and the principal geographical details of Mars have only been observed since 1858. Complete observations of its geography only date from 1862. The first detailed triangulation of the planet, comprising the smallest objects visible by the telescope and measured by the micrometer, was begun in 1877, continued in 1879, and terminated in 1882. It is therefore only within the last few years that the planet Mars has been within the reach of complete terrestrial observation.

According to the most probable cosmogonic theory, Mars is anterior to our planet by several millions of years, and much more advanced in its destiny. The inhabitants of Mars may have been making signals to us for more than a hundred thousand years, without anybody on earth suspecting it. The means of perceiving signals were wanting, even if we had the gift of interpreting their meaning.

The state of the case at present is this. The geographical map of Mars has lately been made, with infinite care, by Schiaparelli, the able director of the Milan Observatory. Now, on this map, which is given in Flammarion's richly illustrated volume, "*Les Terres du Ciel*," we may remark the presence of bright spots, shining like snow illumined by the sun. That their brightness is due to snow is scarcely probable, because they occur close to the equator and in the tropics, as well as in higher latitudes. They can hardly be the summits of mountains, for they are close to seas, and are so symmetrically disposed in relation to certain rectilinear canals, that they compel us involuntarily to take them for geodesic landmarks. We notice triangles, squares, and oblongs.

M. Flammarion is far from asserting that these luminous points have been so placed by engineers or astronomers, or that the sixty straight, parallel, and double canals, in the same planet, which enable the seas to communicate

with each other, are the work of the inhabitants. Nature is so rich in processes that it would be presumptuous to limit her modes of action. Nevertheless, if the people of Mars intended to attract our attention by signals, this method would be one of the simplest, and even is the only one which has hitherto been imagined here. Finally, if such were the case, it would be we who have failed to understand it.

In which there is nothing that ought to surprise us. The inhabitants of earth do not trouble themselves about the heavens. The great majority—perhaps ninety-nine out of every hundred—do not know on what they are walking, and have not the slightest suspicion of the reality. Their thoughts are confined to eating, drinking, amassing objects of divers kinds, patriotically killing each other and being killed; but, as to inquiring where they are and what the universe is, that is no business of theirs. Their native ignorance suffices them.

The inhabitants of Mars, on the contrary, possessing a much older civilisation than ours, may be much more advanced in the way of progress and be in the full enjoyment of intellectual and spiritual life. Perhaps, however, the Martial Academies have declared the earth to be uninhabited and uninhabitable, because it is not identically the same as their own country; because it has only one moon, whereas they have two; because our years are too short; because our sky is often cloudy, whilst theirs is almost always bright; and for a thousand sundry reasons, one as completely conclusive as the other.

After steam, the telegraph, the electric light, and the telephone, would not the discovery of undoubted proofs that humanity exists in another region of our solar archipelago be the most marvellous crowning of the nineteenth century's scientific glory?

And this is only one of M. Flammarion's dreams—which may not all, perhaps, be dreams.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "*Gerald*," "*Alexia*," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER VIII. BOIS-LE COMTE.

WHEN Captain Percival first came to the Château de la Tour Blanche he had no intention of staying there more than a

few days. Even ideas of rushing away the next morning had crossed his mind several times, when Celia's matter-of-factness or her husband's good-humour bored him beyond endurance, or when some fancied little slight upset the balance of his temper more than usual. But still he lingered on from day to day, treated by every one with much more kindness than he deserved, and quite incapable of knowing that his departure might be something of a relief to two at least of the family.

He lounged about the old place in the glorious heat of June, and watched them all, not caring much to share in any of their doings, but making his remarks freely after his own fashion. They indulged him and endured his ways just as other people had done before, for he was original, and could be very pleasant when he liked. There was no stiffness to be seen anywhere, except in the face and manner of old Pierre, who disliked the English stranger so much that he would hardly wait upon him. As to Celia, her tiresome cousin had apparently lost the power of worrying her which he had certainly possessed when he first came to the château. To a creature of his temperament, there was something vexatious in the interest she took in everything that went on round her: in her husband's plans and pursuits, in Antoinette's lessons, in the poor people, the Curé and his charities, the dogs, the horses, the farm, the vineyard. If she was not busy with some of these things, she was working hard at her embroidery. She did not feel the heat, though to Vincent, an old Indian, it was almost overpowering; she walked about all day with a large white parasol, and was always calling Antoinette to go with her. Feelings of unreasoning anger devoured Vincent: he was suspicious of Celia, refusing in his heart to believe that she cared a straw for all these things; but, at the same time, he was jealous of them all, of everything and everybody that seemed to occupy and interest her; they were all his enemies, his rivals; he felt himself neglected and thrown aside for them every hour of the day. Sometimes he almost hated Celia; and there had always been more earnest than play in his amiable wish that he might have the chance of burning her house down.

So the days went on, and in the atmosphere of La Tour Blanche, with its usual light-hearted sweetness, Vincent moved about rather like a spirit of darkness.

Everybody else was happy, it seemed; but his peculiarities did not trouble them much. After all, he reflected, he did not belong to them; his humours did not matter to them; the politeness with which they treated him cost them nothing. He was unhappy, though not nearly so much so as he thought himself. He could not make up his mind to go away, though he knew he had better not stay; but he was tolerably sure—not being omniscient, with all his cleverness—that he hurt nobody but himself by staying.

When he had been about three weeks at La Tour Blanche, a stupid little thing happened. As Celia had told him, there were very few people in the country at this time, but these few were very sociable, and saw a good deal of each other. One day he went with his friends to dine with some distant cousins of Achille's, who lived about ten miles off. He had half wanted to stay at home; but Celia, knowing him better than he knew himself, insisted on his going. They were nice people, she said; they had always been kind to her, and their château was very old and curious. She did not tell Vincent that if he stayed at home, though by his own choice, he would feel himself injured and neglected, and would be in a bad temper all the next day.

"Come; I want you," she said kindly. "You don't so very often do anything to please me."

"Don't I? And whose fault is that, I wonder," said Vincent.

But he submitted, and went.

It was all as Celia had described it, and rather amusing. The people were kind and old-fashioned, very demonstrative, tremendous Royalists, living quite out of the world, and talking so fast that a foreigner could hardly understand them. Their château dated from the time of François Premier, part of it earlier still; it had several great strong towers, a "colombier" large enough for all the pigeons in the country, and vast rooms leading one into the other—terrible in winter, desolate enough even on a summer evening, though deliciously cool. No modern restorer had found his way into the Château of Bois-le-Comte; no modern wealth and taste had furnished these rooms in one correct style or another. The windows were shaded with mean chintz curtains; and spindle-legged furniture, which might have dated from the First Empire, stood stiffly on the bare

floors. From the great high pale walls looked down a collection of the strangest family portraits that Vincent had ever seen. The old plate and china, however, were magnificent; the dinner was perfectly cooked, and enormously long; and both hosts and guests were full of kindness and good-humour. It was not a large party—only Monsieur and Madame de Cernay, and some other people from an opposite direction. These, and the people of the house, were devoted to Achille and Celia. Antoinette had her confidences with one or two other young girls. Vincent would have found himself rather left out in the conversation if Madame de Cernay had not exerted herself to be agreeable to him. She was not fond of the English, it was true; but this was a good-looking man—a soldier, with something interesting about him. It would do him no harm, she probably thought, to realise that there were other handsome women in the world besides his cousin; those discontented eyes of his might be better employed than in following the pretty marquise for ever. If there was any further malice in Madame de Cernay's motive, it must be remembered that she and her husband had been Achille de Montmirail's most intimate friends, before his second marriage disappointed them, and changed everything.

Vincent had no particular objection to flirting with Madame de Cernay. Though in theory he disliked Frenchwomen, he was as ready to be flattered and spoilt by a Frenchwoman as by anybody else. Madame de Cernay had fine eyes and a pretty complexion, knew how to amuse herself and other people, did not care much what she said, and was bent on being agreeable to him. Perhaps, after all, if Celia looked that way, she might as well see how thoroughly well he was entertained for once. So thought Percival to himself.

After dinner, as he and Madame de Cernay were going back with the others into the drawing-room, passing through one or two great bare vaults of dimly-lighted rooms, he suddenly stooped to pick up a rose which somebody before them had just let fall.

At the same moment Antoinette sprang forward from behind.

"Ah! you saw it—mamma's rose. Shall I give it back to her?"

"No, thanks," said Vincent, quietly keeping possession. "I picked it up; it is my prize, not yours, mademoiselle."

"But she will miss it; she will want it," said the girl smiling.

"Then I will give it back to her."

"And a very pretty one, too," said Madame de Cernay, admiring the rose, which he carried in his hand. "I like that wild sort of rose, myself: cream, flushed with red, like a sunrise, if I am not too poetical. But it is not so like Madame de Montmirail; it is not the right rose for her."

"And why not, pray, madame?" asked Vincent.

"How do I know?" said the Baronne, and she looked critically at the rose, her lips trembling with mischief. "It is one of those things one feels and cannot explain. You certainly ought not to want an explanation—you feel it just as I do. There is too much abandon, too much carelessness, about this rose; what shall I say? it has a passion, a sentiment, which hardly suits our pretty marquise. If I gave her a rose it would be a blush rose, something between white and pink, with softly-rounded leaves which always keep their place, and carry their lovely bloom—a certain strength in all their softness. As to this wild thing here, it is a Bohemian, a gipsy of a rose. Give it to me, monsieur. I am an old woman, but it suits me better than it suits madame your cousin."

"You make the rose so interesting, madame, that I think I must keep it myself," said Vincent; and just then the master of the house came up to talk to Madame de Cernay, and he moved away, carrying his rose to the other side of the room.

Later in the evening they went out, and sat in the warm soft moonlight, on a kind of high terrace or rampart overlooking a deep moat, now dry and ivy-grown. The great white walls of the château, with loophole slits of windows, closed them in on two sides; then there was the draw-bridge, now fixed, leading out to a wide court-yard.

Everybody sat in a circle, talking; little dogs played about; Antoinette, still childish, wandered off with her young friends; and Vincent presently slipped away too, and strolled along by the wall of the moat and leaned over it, gazing into the dim depths beneath, rather sulky and alone.

Every one had been very civil to him, but Celia had left him too much to her friends; she had not looked at him or spoken to him through that whole evening, though she must have seen him standing

about waiting for the slightest encouragement to give her back her rose.

Suddenly, as he stood there, he muttered something indignantly, and threw the rose over the low wall. At the same moment, before it had reached the grassy ditch below, a voice close to him exclaimed:

"Mon Dieu! Poor rose! I would not have treated you like that. But no doubt you are punished for the crimes of somebody else."

Vincent started, and laughed nervously. Madame de Cernay was standing by his side, looking very handsome and smiling in the moonlight, and waving her fan.

"I beg your pardon, madame. I did not hear you. I thought I was alone," he said, and for once he was confused.

"People cannot expect to be alone at a dinner-party," said Madame de Cernay. "And people with well-regulated minds don't wish it. Have I offended you? I am sorry; but you interest me. The fact is, as my husband tells me, I am too soft-hearted. I can't enjoy myself when other people are looking miserable."

"And you think that I am looking miserable?" said Vincent.

"Well—not too happy."

"You are kinder than most people," he said, standing upright before her, and looking on the ground. "Most people enjoy the miseries of their fellow-creatures."

"And who, for instance, is so barbarous?"

"Most people, if they are perfectly contented themselves, expect all the world to be so too."

"Even the hearts that they have trodden under foot, on their way to victory," murmured Madame de Cernay. "Well, yes, dear monsieur, there is plenty of that kind of hardness in the world; but I did not know it was common among your excellent English."

"A great deal of it is put on; it is not real. But when people have chosen wrong, they choose to stick to their choice, and pretend they like it. I suspect that that sort of thing is more English than French," said Vincent. He seemed, somehow, to be thinking aloud. Madame de Cernay opened her eyes wide, and listened with all her ears.

"Fate is hard on all of us, sometimes. But there is compensation—generally, at least."

"Some people don't want any."

"Then they must be excellent—or, perhaps, happier than you think."

"Oh, perfectly happy. Nobody could doubt that," said Vincent; and as Madame de Cernay paused for a moment, looking at him curiously, the talk at the far end of the terrace broke into sudden peals of laughter; Celia's laugh, always particularly sweet, rang clear among the rest. At the same time there was a pushing back of chairs on the gravel, and a distant growl of thunder seemed to explain the sultry heaviness of heat which had brooded over the evening.

"The air is very electric," said Madame de Cernay, amiably. "There will be a storm, and after that you will feel better. And, if you like, monsieur, I can show you a little staircase which leads down into the moat. You will easily find your rose. I see it from here."

"Thank you, madame, but it may as well stay where it is," said Vincent, rather crossly.

"Well, yes, as your cousin does not seem to miss it, I agree with you. But now you perceive that you might as well have given it to me."

"Ah, no, madame," he said with a laugh, "you are quite clever enough to see that that was impossible."

"But this is very serious!" said Madame de Cernay, with a half-joking air of sympathy. "You have no idea of the confidences you have made to me this evening."

"Have I?" he said. "I don't think so. It is your wonderful perception."

"I am not generally supposed to be stupid. I tell you, you interest me, and I have a fancy for knowing people's histories. So now I know a little bit of yours, and I don't blame you."

"There is no one to be blamed," he began, turning upon her almost angrily; but the group was breaking up, and now Celia came to meet them along the terrace.

"Have you seen Antoinette?" she said. "We are going. Where is my rose, Vincent? I thought I saw it in your hand."

"Ah, there!" laughed Madame de Cernay. "After carrying it about for an hour, and refusing to give it to me, and finally dropping it into the moat—"

"Oh, it does not matter in the least," said Celia amiably. "It would have been quite faded by this time."

Vincent Percival was not all bad, or all foolish. He remembered too late that there was no love lost between this Frenchwoman and Celia; their manner to each other, with all its politeness, was enough to tell anyone that. The idiocy of his behaviour

appeared to him, as they drove home, in something of its proper light. The thunderstorm had come on quickly, and the last five miles of their way was through pouring sheets of rain, constant cracking peals of thunder, and lightning, terrible and beautiful, which came flashing every minute, illuminating the broad sweeps of country, the woods, the distant hills, all lost again instantly in a blackness deeper than ordinary night.

"I am afraid our fine weather is breaking up," said M. de Montmirail.

"Ah, what a pity! It will spoil all the roses," cried his daughter.

"I must be breaking up too," said Vincent from his corner. "I should be glad to be back in Paris to-morrow night, if you will be good enough to send me to the station."

A flash of lightning at the moment showed Celia's face. She was looking up with quite a new expression—startled dismay; a sudden pain which rushed to the surface, before she had time to hide it.

"To-morrow!" she said.

"My dear cousin," said Achille, with grave kindness, "I am afraid we have not made your visit pleasant to you. Or is it that you dislike our storms? There is something of the fiery south in them, it is true; but they don't come every day."

"Thanks. I have had a very jolly visit, and I like your storms—they are the real thing," said Vincent. "But I have been idling here for three weeks now, very much in your way, all of you—"

"Du tout—not at all, my cousin, I assure you," exclaimed Achille.

Another flash of lightning, and Celia's face again in the dark corner; this time it was quiet and thoughtful, and she was looking down. As Vincent looked, she shrugged her shoulders a little, and pulled her wraps more closely round her.

"You are very good," he said to the Marquis. "But these things must come to an end."

"But you will come again."

Vincent did not find that his hostess made any objection to his going away. She took it as a matter of course, like most other things, and did not trouble herself to express any regrets. He was half glad that it was so easily settled, half savage at her apparent indifference.

"She would make more fuss if some fool of a Frenchman were going away, after being here two nights—M. de Cernay, or that old fellow at Bois-le-Comte," Vincent

told himself, as he came down to breakfast that last morning, and heard her laughing with Antoinette before he reached the dining-room. "I wish I had never come," he went on thinking. "Why did I come? Because I wanted to see what her life was like, and whether she was changed, and so on. Well, her life is a poor sort of thing, and she is not changed. Just the same cold-blooded creature; and yet—well, there is no understanding her."

He, perhaps, understood her still less when after breakfast it appeared that she was going to drive with him herself to the station at Saint Bernard. It would be convenient to her, she said; she had business in the town; she made no pretence of wishing to see him off, merely saying in her calm way, "I can drop you at the station." But why should she have done it at all?

"I would have gone with pleasure," said the Marquis, "but I have an engagement at the Mairie."

"I know you have, mon ami," said his wife. "And I won't take Antoinette, because I know she does not want to come."

"But anything you like," the girl began; but her stepmother put her aside very gently, but decidedly.

"It is all arranged," she said. "The carriage will be here in a quarter of an hour, Vincent—if you will be ready:" and she went out of the room.

So Captain Percival ended his first visit to La Tour Blanche. It was a glorious day after the rain; all the world fresh and glittering with raindrops, under a sky which looked as if it knew no storms. The Marquis and Antoinette stood on the terrace, and wished him a good journey. Achille was kind and smiling, as usual, and shouted some little commission to his wife at the last moment. Antoinette looked a little grave. When the carriage had whirled off down the avenue, she turned to her father, and with a little movement of involuntary relief put her hand in his arm.

"I wonder if mamma's cousin has many friends," she said—"whether many people like him in England."

"How can I tell? His relations seem to like him," said her father. "You seem to be prejudiced, and so is M. de Cernay; but neither of you likes the English."

"Oh, I like the English. I always agree with you. Only this one is very discontented. He has the air of a wild beast looking out of a hole."

"What a pretty comparison! And you in your pinafore are like an over-grown chicken. Run away and feed your animals. I must go to the village."

Antoinette went off laughing; but after a minute or two she became grave and thoughtful, and the old woman who looked after the geese found her a little severe that morning.

Celia had plenty to say as she and Vincent drove through the wooded lanes to Saint Bernard. Her talk was all about nothing—nothing, at least, that interested him; the houses in the neighbourhood, the people last night, various plans of her own.

"I wish I were going to Paris, too," she said. "You will find it lovely; only getting a little too hot."

"No; it won't be too hot. Come with me," said Vincent, rather grimly.

"Ah, what fun if I could!" she said lightly. "But now tell me—when are you coming again?"

"Never."

"Oh, what a very bad compliment to us all. Nonsense! I shall expect you in August. And Vincent, I wish you would bring Aunt Flo with you. Now, tell her, when you go home, that you have promised to bring her to me in August. Don't forget."

"Charity begins at home," said Vincent.

"You are too deep for me. I don't understand you."

"I must think of myself first. It might be good for my mother, but it would be bad for me. I couldn't stand another three weeks of it, Celia."

"Have you been so horribly bored, then?" she said in her cool, unconscious way. "Well, I am very sorry; but you will find it quite different in the autumn. Perhaps September will be better than August. We are really very gay then. You will come then; I shall consider it an engagement."

"Why do you want me to come?" And then he laughed.

"Because we are old friends, and I like you. So does Achille."

"Thank you. It does great credit to Achille's amiable disposition."

"I think so too, to tell you the truth," said Celia. "But nobody can deny that you are original, and so an interesting study."

"What a happy life, to be an interesting study! One might as well be a fossil dug out of that bank yonder."

"You are the most difficult person to

please that I ever met. Most people like to know that they are interesting."

Vincent made no answer, and for a few minutes Celia looked away at the poplars by the road side. They were close on Saint Bernard now.

"Well," he said at last, as they began to rattle at a tremendous pace through the stony, narrow street, "it is not your fault if your kindness is thrown away. As you ask me to come again, I probably shall; you know what you are doing. For several reasons it might be better not; but if you really wish me to come—"

"You are talking in wonderful riddles," she said.

"Of which you know the answers," Vincent interrupted her.

She bowed her head. There was a faint look of annoyance on her beautiful face, and her colour deepened slightly as she said:

"I dare say we understand each other well enough—quite as well as we need. I hope you will give my message to Aunt Flo."

They stopped at the station, and just then Monsieur and Madame de Cernay drove past, with much smiling, and waving, and salutation. The sight of Madame de Cernay reminded Vincent what a fool he had made of himself the night before, and improved his manners and his temper suddenly.

He shook hands with his cousin, and said good-bye in a slightly off-hand way.

"Till September, then," she said; and she gave him a charming smile as he stood on the station steps; then the carriage dashed away round a corner, and she was gone.

He stood, for a moment, looking blankly after her.

"Why am I going away? I need not have gone. What a hopeless ass I am! She is simply magnificent."

These, and more reflections like them, occupied Captain Percival's mind through most of his journey.

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